

STEVENAGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health  
for the year ended 31st December, 1948.

5th July, 1949.

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Stevenage Urban District Council.

Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my annual report in accordance with the  
directions of Ministry of Health Circular 3/49.

LOCAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	...	4,576
Residential Population - Mid 1948 - (Registrar General's Estimate)	...	...	...	...	...	6,413
Number of inhabited houses	...	...	...	...	...	1,930
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£40,292
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	£157

Extracts from Vital Statistics for the Year 1948.

	Totals	M.	F.	
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate)	101	59	42	} LIVE BIRTHRATE per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ..16.2 (England & Wales 17.9)
(Illegitimate)	3	2	1	
(All)	104	61	43	
STILLBIRTHS (Legitimate)	1	1	-	} STILLBIRTH-RATE per 1,000 total (live and still births)...9.5
(Illegitimate)	-	-	-	
(All)	1	1	-	
DEATHS	67	28	39	DEATHRATE per 1,000 of the estimated resident population... ..... 10.4. (England & Wales 10.3)

Deathrate of Infants under one year of age:

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	29
				(England & Wales 34)	
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births	...	...	...	...	30
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births	-	-	-	-	-
Actual number of deaths under 1 year:					
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	3
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	-
Total					3
Deaths from Puerperal Causes (Puerperal Sepsis)	...	...	...	...	-
(Other Puerperal Causes)	...	...	...	...	-
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	7
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	-
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	-

Comment on Vital Statistics.

The estimate of the Registrar-General gives an annual increase of 83 for  
the local population. Both the birthrate and deathrate are lower than the 1947  
figures while stillbirth and infant mortality rates continued favourable.

The chief causes of death were: Heart disease 23, other circulatory  
diseases 8, intracranial vascular lesion 8, cancer (all sites) 7, pneumonia 3  
and premature birth 2. Apart from one death from respiratory tuberculosis there  
was no death from infectious disease, while for a second year there was no local  
death recorded from Road Traffic Accident.

## General Provision of Health Services.

Following the retirement of Dr. Suggit in August 1948 there was instituted a combined post of Divisional Medical Officer for the County Health and School Medical Services and District M.O.H. to your District, to the Urban Districts of Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston and to the Rural District of Hitchin.

The functions of the district sanitary authority are unchanged by the National Health Service Act.

## Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

### Water Supplies.

The Town is supplied by 2 water pumping plants, both electrically operated, from which a constant and normal supply of water is distributed by main to 1,881 houses (approximate population 6,266), and by stand pipes to 9 houses (approximate population 22), while 40 houses (approximate population 125) are supplied by private wells.

49 samples of water taken by your sanitary inspector were submitted to the Luton Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological examination, and 35 samples by Messrs. Rideal, Rideal and Sciver, London (30 for bacteriological examination and 5 for chemical examination).

### Summary of samples submitted for bacteriological examination to the Luton Public Health Laboratory.

<u>Description</u>	<u>No. of samples</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory.</u>
Town Supply: Raw Water	42	40	2
Town Supply: Chlorinated water	5	5	-
Private wells	2	2	-

### Summary of samples taken for bacteriological examination by Messrs. Rideal, Rideal and Sciver, London.

<u>Description</u>	<u>No. of samples</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Town Supply: Raw Water	18	13	5
Chlorinated water	12	12	-

### Summary of samples taken for chemical examination by Messrs. Rideal, Rideal and Sciver, London.

<u>Description</u>	<u>No. of samples</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Town supply: Raw Water	5	5	-

### General Remarks.

The geological position of Stevenage lies on the edge of a basin and therefore the water supply will always be liable to surface contamination. During recent years the water supply has intermittently been contaminated and, to counteract this, the water was heavily chlorinated which, although effective, caused much criticism by the consumers who objected to the taste of the water. A scheme has now been approved for the water to be super-chlorinated at the inlet to the reservoir with de-chlorination at the out-let which is expected to be in operation in the forthcoming year (1949).

Footnote: Such measure of super-chlorination has been in full operation since April, 1949.



## Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

Total number of inspections for all purposes 929, divided as follows:-

Defects under the Housing Acts	271
Defects under the Factories Act	33
Prevention of Infectious Diseases including disinfection and disinfection	11
Sanitary conditions of school, public halls and cinemas.	4
Inspections under the Milk and Dairies Order (including farms)	61
Inspection of slaughterhouses, butchers' shops, vans and food stores.	106
Meat and Food inspections	6
Miscellaneous food inspections	47
Prevention of nuisances	69
Inspection of drainage etc.	27
Inspection of the Town's water supply and water samples.	48
Inspection of private wells and water samples	2
Inspection re rats and mice destruction	30
Inspection under the Food and Drugs Act	
(1) Ice Cream	36
(2) Restaurant kitchens	88
(3) Preparation rooms	16
Inspections re smoke observations	11
Inspections re Shops Act	2

### Miscellaneous.

Inspections re storage of petroleum	14
Inspections re living and social conditions of applicants for council houses	9
Inspections re ambulance depot	36
Inspections re mortuary.	2

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH IN  
RESPECT OF THE YEAR, 1948, FOR THE URBAN DISTRICT OF STEVENAGE,  
IN THE COUNTY OF HERTFORD.

PART I OF THE ACT.

1. INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises.	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	6	6		
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	44	26		
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers premises)	2	1		
Total	52	33		

2. CASES in which DEFECTS were found

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1		1	
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage offloors (S.6)					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient					
(b) Unsuitable or defective					
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act(not including offences relating to Outwork)	1	1			
Total	2	2		1	

PART VIII OF THE ACT.

OUTWORK.

(Sections 110 & 111.)

There are no outworkers in this District.

### Housing.

Routine house to house inspection was carried out at 73 houses and 9 houses were inspected for complaints with regard to repairs.

91 Council houses were erected during the year, and none by private enterprise.

### Overcrowding Act, 1936.

6 houses were found overcrowded, 4 of which have been abated and the other 2 are under consideration.

Sanitary improvements were undertaken in existing dwelling houses, viz:-

Premises re-drained	12
Sanitary improvements including drainage	49
Other work for the abatement of nuisances	64

2 formal notices were served and the rest of the work was carried out by persuasive methods.

### Verminous Premises.

2 houses were treated for vermin which were eradicated by spraying with a liquid vermin mixture named "Zaldeside," while inspection of furniture, bedding etc. was carried out by the local authority.

### Inspection and Supervision of Food.Milk Supply (Special Designations Order) 1936.

41 samples of milk were taken for bacteriological examination which gave the following results:-

<u>Description</u>	<u>No. of samples</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>Failed</u>
Tuberculin Tested	24	11	13
Accredited	1	1	-
Pasteurised	14	14	-
Ungraded	2	-	2

### Ice Cream.

At present there are no manufacturers of ice cream in Stevenage.

26 samples of ice cream were taken for bacteriological examination from retailers, restaurants etc. and the following summary shows the provisional grading:-

<u>No. of samples</u>	<u>Grade 1</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>	<u>Grade 4</u>
26	3	12	2	8

### Meat and other Foods.

There are 4 licensed private slaughterhouses (including one knackers' slaughterhouse) in the District which are kept up to a fair standard. Only occasional slaughterings licensed by the Local Food Officer are carried out, amounting in all to 15 pigs of which the carcasses of 12 were inspected.

Foods surrendered as unfit for human consumption in shops, stores etc. have to be certified before replacements can be made.

Bakehouses, restaurant kitchens, preparation rooms, manufacturers of preserved food and tradesmen's vans etc. are inspected with a view to keeping up a good standard of cleanliness.

### Food Poisoning.

There were no outbreaks or notifications during the year.



### Sewage and Sewage Disposal.

The Town is provided with a foul sewer 24" diameter leading to bacterial treatment at the Sewage Disposal works and a 36" surface water sewer discharging into a water-course, both of which are satisfactory.

### Refuse Collection and Disposal or Salvage.

House refuse collection, the disposal of same and the cleansing of the Town is supervised and carried out by the Surveyor. The refuse is disposed of by semi-controlled tipping.

v During the year 41 tons of materials were salvaged which realised £273.

### Smoke Observations.

5 smoke observations were taken, 4 at a factory and 1 at a workshop. At the factory a nuisance intermittently takes place caused by grit emissions. This eventually will be remedied by the installation of a grit arrester.

### Petroleum (Consolidation) Act, 1928.

14 premises are licensed for petroleum, carbide of calcium etc. and the regulations are satisfactorily complied with.

### Prevalence of and control over Infectious and other disease.

Total notifications of infectious disease were low, the figures for the year being: whooping cough 34, scarlet fever 9, measles 4, and erysipelas 1. The scarlet fever cases were mainly in the fourth quarter - partly connected with a residential childrens home. Of the 9 cases notified 5 were admitted to isolation hospital. Whooping cough was mildly prevalent in the third quarter.

Diphtheria has been completely absent from the area for the fourth successive year.

Diphtheria Prophylaxis. In addition to its continued provision by the Herts County welfare and school health service such is now freely obtainable under the National Health Service from private practitioners. Figures for children immunised in each district during the year are not immediately available but there has been no slackening off either in publicity given such measure or in the degree of its acceptance by parents.

### Tuberculosis.

#### New Cases Notified.

Age Periods	Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 - 1	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	1	-	-
15 - 25	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	-	1	-	1
35 - 45	-	1	-	1
45 - 55	-	-	-	-
55 - 65	-	-	-	-
and over	-	1	-	-
Totals	-	4	-	2

### Deaths from tuberculosis.

One female death, from respiratory type, was recorded for the year by the Registrar General.

In conclusion, I would acknowledge having received every help from your chief officers and for my predecessor in office since taking up duties as district medical officer of health in September, 1948. Particularly would I acknowledge the invaluable help received from your sanitary inspector, Mr. H. Foden, who has been responsible for compiling the sanitary sections of this report.

Your obedient Servant,

VICTOR R. WALKER.

District Medical Officer  
of Health.

